

## POLICY – HAND WASHING

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### 1. National Quality Standards

Area	Concept	Descriptor
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.2	Health practices & procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected.
2.2.1	Supervision	At all times, reasonable precautions and adequate supervision ensure children are protected from harm and hazard.

Appendix 1 includes the Education and Care Services National Regulations

### 2. Purpose

- 2.1 Baringa Early Learning Centre (Baringa) is committed to ensuring the health and safety of all educators, staff, volunteers, families, and children, providing a safe and healthy environment. Effective hand hygiene significantly reduces the risk of infection and is therefore of the utmost importance. We aim to implement specific hand washing practices regularly to minimise the risks associated with cross infection of viral and bacterial borne diseases.

### 3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, and visitors of Baringa.

### 4. Policy Statement

- 4.1 Infection can be spread through direct physical contact between people, airborne droplets from coughing and sneezing or from contact with surfaces and objects. Children come into contact with a number of other children and adults, toys, eating utensils, and equipment whilst being cared for in early education and care services. We aim to create a hygienic environment to minimise the spread of diseases and infections.

- 4.2 Baringa adheres to National Regulation requirements, standards and guidelines to support the effectiveness of our *Hand Washing Policy*. We aim to educate and encourage children to wash their hands frequently and effectively which will help to reduce the incidence of infectious diseases, adhering to guidelines provided in *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* and recommendations from the Department of Health- Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) to guide best practice.
- 4.3 We believe the hygiene practices of children being cared for should be as rigorous as those of staff and educators. Our environment supports the creation of appropriate healthy hygiene habits during early childhood to ensure lifelong healthy decisions and actions.

## 5. Implementation

5.1 To achieve the greatest level of personal hygiene, Baringa will ensure:

- a) All employees, parents, and visitors are encouraged to use the alcohol-based sanitiser upon arrival at Baringa each day.
- b) Signage is provided to prompt visitors and children to wash their hands regularly and effectively when visiting Baringa.
- c) Paper towel is provided to encourage staff, children, and visitors to thoroughly dry their hands, and dispose of the paper towel in the bin provided.
- d) Disposable tissues are used to wipe noses, eyes or mouths and disposed of in the bin provided immediately after use.
- e) Hands are washed thoroughly using soap and water:
  - (i) following the use of tissues
  - (ii) after using the toilet.

5.2 A Nominated Supervisor/ Responsible person will ensure all educators and staff:

- a) Wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds regularly throughout the day, and:
  - (i) before and after eating and handling food
  - (ii) before and after preparing bottles for infants
  - (iii) before and after applying sunscreen or other lotions to children
  - (iv) after using the toilet
  - (v) after wiping a child's nose
  - (vi) after blowing their own nose
  - (vii) after helping children use the toilet
  - (viii) after cleaning high touch surfaces (tables, light switches, door handles, computers, iPads)
  - (ix) after cleaning or mopping floors
  - (x) after changing learning environments – rooms, indoor/outdoor
  - (xi) whenever their hands are visibly dirty (after gardening, mud play, painting)
  - (xii) before leaving Baringa at the end of the day.
- b) Adhere to effective food preparation and food handling procedures, and wash their hands before and after wearing disposable gloves for:
  - (i) nappy changing
  - (ii) preparing food
  - (iii) administering medication
  - (iv) administering first aid

- (v) cleaning spills- faeces, vomit, or blood
- (vi) cleaning with disinfectant or chemicals
- (vii) handling garbage and/or contaminated materials.

5.3 Educators will ensure:

- (a) children are explicitly taught the correct process of hand washing.
- (b) children are carefully supervised when hand washing.
- (c) children are reminded to wash their hands frequently throughout the day.
- (d) they model effective handwashing procedures.
- (e) the required equipment and resources are easily accessible and appropriate to use- liquid soap, running water, paper towel.
- (f) information about routines and songs for hand washing are shared with families to encourage routines at home.

5.3 Strategies educators will use to encourage effective hand hygiene practice include:

- a) talking about the importance of hand hygiene.
- b) talking about when hand washing is appropriate and why (in an age-appropriate manner).
- c) singing a song or reciting a poem/rap as a guide to how long it should take to wash hands (e.g., singing happy birthday twice is a sufficient time frame).
- d) using a clear visual poster with step-by-step instructions.
- e) using positive language.
- f) encouraging and using positive reinforcement.
- g) ensuring equipment is accessible.
- h) providing clear, simple routines.
- i) giving children sufficient time to practice and develop their skills.
- j) ensuring adequate supervision and assistance is available when required.
- k)** using STEM opportunities to teach about germs and prevention (i.e.: pepper and soap experiment).

5.4 Effective hand drying is just as important as comprehensive hand washing. Research shows that wet hands can pick up and transfer up to 1000 times more bacteria than dry hands. Drying hands thoroughly also helps remove any germs that may not have been washed off.

5.5 Baringa provides children, staff, and educators with disposable paper towel to ensure effective hand hygiene. Bins are provided to dispose of used paper towel, which is then composted where possible in order to reduce its impact on the environment.

## 6. Feedback

Families and staff may provide feedback about this document by emailing [admin@baringa.org.au](mailto:admin@baringa.org.au)

## 7. Approval and Review Details

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Baringa Board
Administrator	Executive Officer
Next Review Date	31 October 2024
History	Details
Original Approval and Authority Date	This policy supersedes the previous Hygiene Standards, S35 of the Baringa Policies and Procedures Manual

Approval and Review	Details
Amendment Authority and Date	31 October 2021

### Appendix 1 Education and Care Services National Regulations

Education and Care Services National Regulations	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
88	Infectious diseases
93	Administration of medication
106	Laundry and hygiene facilities
109	Toilet and hygiene facilities
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures

### Appendix 2 Source

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Government Department of Health Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC)

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Standard. (2020).

National Health and Medical Research Council. (2012). *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.*

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).

Safe Work Australia

Victoria State Government Better Health Channel